

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS,

and

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
TEACHERS,

Plaintiffs,

v.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE, *et al.*,

Defendants.

Case No. 1:25-cv-02429-MKV

Declaration of Abigail Greenleaf

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY
PROFESSORS,

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v.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. *et*
al.,

Defendants.

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DECLARATION OF ABIGAIL GREENLEAF

I, Abigail Greenleaf, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am an Assistant Professor of Population and Family Health at Columbia University. My primary affiliation is with ICAP, a global health center at the School of Public Health composed of researchers and health professionals. I have been an Assistant Professor at Columbia since 2021.
2. I have a B.S. from George Washington University, a Master of Public Health (MPH) from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University.
3. I am a member of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).
4. I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this declaration, and if called as a witness in this action, I could and would testify competently to these facts.
5. I am a public health demographer. My research focuses on collecting cell phone-based data in low- and middle-income countries where using cell phones to survey populations is an increasingly viable methodology.

6. In 2022, I applied for and in 2023 received a K01 grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). K01 grants are called “Mentored Research Scientist Career Development Awards.” As NIH explains, their purpose is “to provide support and protected time for an intensive, supervised career development experience in the biomedical, behavioral, or clinical sciences leading to research independence.”¹ The term of a K01 grant is five years.

7. The specific project funded by my K01 grant involves collecting data on contraceptive use and HIV-prevention behaviors among young women in Eswatini, the country with the highest HIV prevalence rate in the world. Since receiving the grant, I have recruited more than 300 participants to the study. I have been collecting biweekly data from these participants for more than a year, calling young women on cell phones and asking questions about their sexual activity and contraceptive use. By contacting participants on their cell phones rather than relying on face-to-face data collection (the predominant approach to data collection in sub-Saharan Africa), I am able to collect long-term, high-volume data that will lead to new insights about young women’s sexual and reproductive health. The ultimate goal of the research is to inform policymaking to address the high rates of undesired pregnancies and HIV incidence in this vulnerable age group.

8. I applied for this K01 grant to support both my short-term and long-term career development goals. In the short term, I am interested in understanding contraceptive dynamics in a country with high HIV prevalence, particularly among young women. That is a priority population for efforts to improve global sexual and reproductive health. In the long term, I aim to make significant scholarly contributions to the field of sexual and reproductive population studies. The project funded by the grant helps me achieve that goal in several ways, as it allows me to develop skills in advanced statistical methods, to gain expertise in HIV prevention and risk, and to be trained in relevant sociology theories.

¹ <https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/career-development/K01>

9. On March 10, 2025, I received notice from Columbia that my K01 grant had been terminated. I have not received a formal notice from NIH reflecting the termination, but I understand that it was on the list of NIH-terminated grants provided by the government to Columbia.

10. I am greatly concerned about the impact that terminating this project would have on the research participants and their willingness to enroll in future research studies. I have been speaking with these young women every two weeks for more than a year and asking them highly sensitive questions. Abruptly stopping a study like this erodes participants' trust and contributes to increased skepticism of medical research more broadly. The uncertainty about future grant funding exacerbates my concerns. In my opinion, it raises significant ethical problems to enroll patients in research studies that we cannot commit to completing.

11. The termination of my K01 grant has also caused me considerable personal stress due to concern about job loss. I believe this job stress contributed to a failed egg retrieval cycle shortly after I learned about the termination, and my doctor agreed that was likely the case.

12. As explained, a major purpose of this type of grant is to provide me with protected research time that will help support my long-term career goals. As stipulated in the Notice of Award, 75% of my time is dedicated to the project funded by the K01 grant. More than half of my salary is covered by the grant. Columbia is temporarily covering that portion of my salary during the immediate interim period while it considers next steps, but it is not clear how long that will extend. I still had three years remaining on the grant term. Columbia has not committed to cover my salary for that entire period.

13. It will be very hard to find alternative sources of funding to cover my salary. I am not aware of sources of private funding (as opposed to NIH) that allow for the same kind of dedicated research time for early-stage investigators for the subject matter I study. Although I hope to avoid this outcome, if federal funding is not restored, it is possible I will lose my job and have to leave the field entirely.

14. At minimum, the loss of the grant means I will no longer have the protected research time to develop my skills as a scientist. I also will not have dedicated funding to participate in professional development activities, such as academic conferences, that would help advance my career as an independent investigator. I now am no longer permitted to use my grant funds for conferences. I paid out of pocket to attend the Population Association of America's annual meeting in Washington, D.C. in April 2025. If federal funding is not restored, I will very likely be unable to attend the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population's (IUSSP) International Population Conference, which will be held in Australia in July 2025. That means I will be deprived of important opportunities to build connections and learn from researchers, policymakers and practitioners with expertise in my field.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 8 day of May 2025.


Abigail Greenleaf